



# MONTEREY NEWS

January 2004  
VOLUME XXXIV • Number 1



## The Town

With the close of the old year, town representatives continued planning for the new one. December is not a time of intense government activities; like everyone else, those who serve on committees and boards have holiday preparations to make, celebrations to attend, and guests coming in the door. Still, officialdom's faces are turned toward the future.

Among other things on the docket:

### Scenic Mountain Act

The Scenic Mountain Act, adopted by overwhelming vote of the town last spring, is at the stage where the Conservation Commission is working on local regulations to present to the Select Board for approval. Under the capable and calm leadership of Chris Blair, the Commission drafted preliminary language and forwarded it to the Select Board for review and comment. The Select Board, mindful that an open process serves all, called a public hearing to review the language, which was moved (at the request of the Coffee Club) to an evening time slot so as many as wished to could attend. The December 15th hearing was held at the Firehouse, and various concerns were raised regarding the details of the map and the specific wording of some proposed regulations. The Select Board listened carefully, and then discussed suggested revisions at their next meeting. Blair has suggested

that the Conservation Commission and Select Board hold a joint forum when the Conservation Commission has finished its work on proposed changes, which may include a less inclusive map, changes to the amount of firewood that may be cut, a farming exemption, and provisions for vista pruning, among other things.

### Emergency Planning

Ray Tryon stopped by to ask the Select Board to consider appointing a head of a Local Emergency Planning Commission (LPEC). Start-up for these local commissions has begun, and the state has requested that we have a point person. In many towns, it's the police or fire chief, and responsibilities include organizing medical and other personnel in the event of an emergency. A regional LPEC may be the way to go. Tryon asked that the town look for a person who is

willing to take on the work to organize the teams that form the LPEC locally (medical, fire, roads, public safety, etc.), and the Select Board agreed to take that under advisement. Tryon himself is not, he says, interested in taking on the job. Police Chief Gareth Backhaus attended a regional LPEC meeting at Fairview Hospital, and concurs that a local LPEC is a good idea.

While many people think of disasters like 9/11 when it comes to emergency planning, here in rural New England experience has shown that emergencies may take many forms, and only some of them are predictable. Last year, a plane crash on Mount Wilcox was one kind of emergency, requiring a coordinated response by fire, rescue, safety, and medical personnel under physically difficult circumstances. And don't forget that some emergencies need not only



Glynnis Oliver



organized community response but also individual planning. What would your family do if you lost power in mid-January and it continued to stay off? Last winter, some communities to the north and west in New England experienced several weeks of no electricity. It may translate into no water, no heat, no light, no refrigeration, and no gasoline pumps—just for starters. Add several feet of snow to that, so that you are housebound. What would you do? Thought should be given to your own household's food, water supply, fuel sources (including thinking about how fuel could be safely stored), and location and conservation of resources. The idea, according to Tryon, is for people to be proactive rather than reactive, and to start making sensible plans to cover their own circumstances in case of an emergency.

## Town Hall Addition

The addition to Town Hall is scheduled for completion in mid-January, according to architect David Bixby. Work will commence at that point on the front room to prepare it for new uses as the offices of town personnel move into the addition. Stay tuned!

## On the Roads

Director of Operations Maynard Forbes is looking into how we might fulfill the EPA mandate that we develop spill prevention and containment plans for materials and fuels stored at the town garage and for the transfer station. Each

will need a separate plan, based on the different uses of each site, and each plan must be done by professional engineers. Salt and sand stored at the town shed area should be covered, as the town is liable for damages from salt runoff and subsequent percolation. Additionally, the volume of salt is reduced every time the pile gets wet. Sand should be preserved from freezing, as well. Forbes will solicit and review engineering proposals before making a recommendation.

The dowager of the road crew's fleet, a Ford 350 one-ton truck, has had to have more repair work done on it. The brakes went, and then the idler pulley ("When it goes, you lose everything—and it disintegrated!"), which meant the truck had to be towed into the shop in Great Barrington. Total for repairs to this antique so far this year? Five thousand dollars. This spring, it might be time to order a new one.

Since we all know more snow is coming, Forbes was asked for advice for homeowners that would help town road crews continue to do the enormous job of clearing the roads efficiently. "Please don't park in the road when you know snow is coming," he replied. "And please don't push snow from your driveway into the road. If you push it to the other side of the road, it won't get plowed back into your driveway when the town plows go by." He added that the town crews make every effort to avoid plowing road snow into driveways.

Happy New Year!

— K. Wasiuk

## Pignatelli Pays a Visit

William "Smitty" Pignatelli, our representative to the General Court in Boston, talked with Monterey voters for several hours on December 5th in the social room of the Meetinghouse. The event was sponsored by the town Democratic Committee, and moderated by Charlie Ferris, who chairs the committee.

Pignatelli, who is finishing his first year at the legislature, said that there had been no honeymoon period for first-year legislators. "It was, and continues to be, a difficult time for budgets." Faced with a 3 billion dollar deficit, the governor vowed to close the gap without raising taxes, and the result, Pignatelli said, was to cut the heart out of many programs. The next legislative session anticipates a \$1.5 to 2.2 billion dollar deficit just to cover the rising costs of insurance, electricity, etc., without any increases in programs.

Pignatelli said he favors a modest raise in taxes as part of the solution to the problem. He would, he said, support bringing the income tax back to where it was. "Tax increases are not a cure-all, but should be part of an overall solution." The result of the Governor's approach has been to cut local aid 15–20%. "Towns like yours took the maximum penalty because you are already running efficiently, and there is nowhere to cut. A \$500,000 cut in your budget, which is already tightly structured . . . where do you cut?" The towns are forced to raise property taxes as a result, which Pignatelli says is regressive taxation. "Unfortunately," he said, "the Governor doesn't agree."

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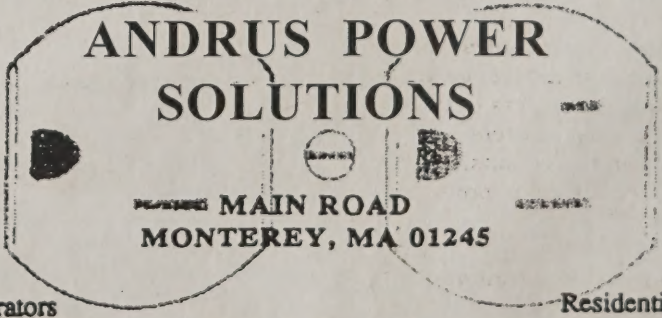
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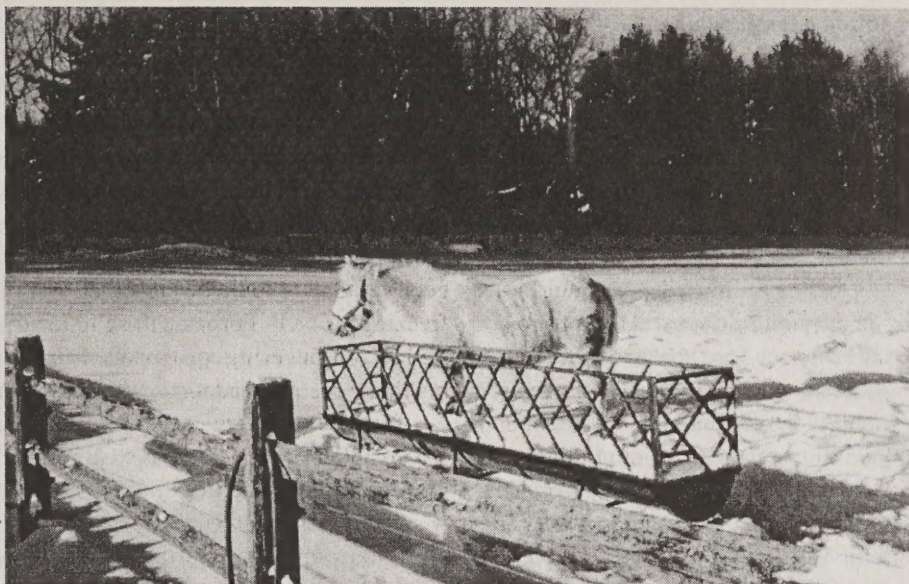
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Pignatelli said he wanted to get a sense of what Monterey voters' concerns were. Jobs, suggested one voter. Pignatelli said he believes that innovative technology may help to provide answers for rural areas like the Berkshires, and that we should be investing in technology and not smokestacks. Corporate profits have risen while employers have fewer employees, which does not make them hurry to open employment back up. A newly passed job stimulus package, better public transportation, airport development in Pittsfield, and other investments in infrastructure (cable, internet connectivity, cell phones, etc.) will help. Revitalizing Pittsfield is important, he said, as "we can all feed off of that" through creation of more midlevel jobs.

The Clean Elections Act was another area of interest. Pignatelli advocates campaign reform but believes this is a poorly written law. "In difficult times, I don't want my tax dollars to go to people who are running negative campaigns or to fund losers when we are laying off firefighters and teachers." Believing that that kind of thing sours people on politics in general, he would instead favor some kind of tightly administered trust fund.

Another topic of discussion was the recent Massachusetts Supreme Court ruling giving the legislature 180 days to come up with a solution regarding gay unions. Pignatelli asked how many people were in favor of allowing some sort of gay marriage or civil union. Nearly every hand went up. He characterized this issue as the greatest civil rights struggle



Glynis Oliver

since the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and '60s, and said he is in favor of civil unions for same sex couples because that is equal protection under the law. "The next four years are critical," Pignatelli said, "because the President will most likely appoint Supreme Court justices" and a ruling by the court seems likely. One difficulty, according to Pignatelli, is that in doing this on a state-by-state basis, the issue of reciprocity of recognition of such unions is much more difficult. "I wish the U.S. Supreme Court would rule, instead of doing this state by state," he said.

And the environment came up as well. The Massachusetts Land Use Act is, he believes, a badly written law. He is in favor of local zoning and local control, and supports enticements for towns to keep open space. The existing law, he said, allows developers to avoid respecting zoning entirely. Pignatelli voted to override recycling and river waste vetoes by the Governor.

Pensions were another area of concern. The state pension fund is facing a

crisis, as well as the Berkshire County pension fund, both of which are underfunded. One voter suggested that he was reluctant to pay into a pension fund for state or other municipal employees when as a self-employed person, no one was funding a pension for him. "Why should I pay for something when I will see no benefit from it?" the voter asked. Pignatelli said that new state employees are paying in at a higher level, but acknowledged that the problem exists and there is no easy solution.

"Part of the fiscal crunch," he said, "is health insurance costs. Of a \$23 billion dollar state budget, \$6 billion is health—26 percent of the total budget! It is the single fastest growing item, and a serious issue. We *have* to get our arms around it."

Pignatelli asked that constituents e-mail him with thoughts or concerns at: [rep.smittypignatelli@hou.state.ma.us](mailto:rep.smittypignatelli@hou.state.ma.us).

— K. Wasiuk

**Peter S. Vallianos**  
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## Disaster Averted in Church Boiler

*And the boiler in the basement blew!*  
— Bob Dylan, "Ballad of Black Diamond Bay"

No there won't be any sad ballads sung about the demise of our 150-year-old Monterey Meeting House. Fortunately an early arriving Coffee Club member smelled the fuel oil. Our oil burner service company came promptly and made a temporary fix. An antiquated safety switch did not stop oil pumping when the oil didn't ignite, causing the firebox to fill with oil. The technicians burnt it off. A huge dramatic cloud of black soot blew out the chimney and changed the white snow to black all around the village. The community supper was postponed due to the reek of fuel oil in the basement.

In the early 1990s the whole community rallied around a renovation campaign to save the Meeting House, this wonderful old treasure. Over \$200,000 in donations plus a federal grant restored the foundations, rotted wood, etc. At that time it was decided we couldn't afford to replace the boiler also. Alas, now is the time. To pay for repairs and a replacement will cost approximately \$10,000.

While the building is the home of the Monterey United Church of Christ, it has also long been a gathering place for many community events: town meetings, community potluck suppers, concerts, Girl Scouts, and many other activities. Two years ago, when the general store closed,

## Edith Wharton Focus of Jan. 14 Community Dinner

One of the most requested topics for community dinners has been local history, and our January 14th dinner will take us back to the Berkshires of the early twentieth century. MaryKate Jordan's talk, "Edith Wharton and Beartown Mountain," will explore Wharton's descriptions and observations of the then-isolated towns surrounding Beartown Mountain and the people who lived there. MaryKate, longtime Monterey resident, writer, and astrologer, worked at The Mount, Wharton's estate in Lenox, in

a group started meeting in the basement every morning for coffee. Some mornings over thirty people gather to kibitz. Participants come from all walks of life and many religious backgrounds, but all have a great love for Monterey. Anyone who buys a cup of coffee is automatically a member of the Coffee Club.

The members of the Monterey Coffee Club have taken the leadership in this fund-raising effort. Almost immediately over \$1,000 was raised among themselves. In early January an appeal letter will be sent to those who have supported the Meeting House in the past. If you would like to contribute, make checks payable to the Monterey Meeting House Boiler Fund and send them to P.O. Box 182, Monterey, MA 01245.

— Steve Pullen

2002 as a tour guide and in 2003 as house manager. The potluck begins at 6:00 p.m., and everyone is welcome.

We apologize to all those who cooked and brought offerings to the community dinner on December 10th, only to find that it had been postponed until the following week due to last minute boiler problems at the church. Those who braved the nasty rainstorm the following week to attend the rescheduled dinner were not disappointed. Karl Finger led a seasonal sing-along, coaxing beautiful harmonies and much enthusiasm from the group. Everyone seemed reluctant to go home and the program ran a little longer than usual, but when we left the church we found that the rain had turned into a lovely light snow that seemed to reflect the peaceful mood created by the music. Thank you, Karl, for a magical evening.

Everyone is welcome to attend the dinners that take place on the second Wednesday of each month (6:00–8:00 p.m.) at the Monterey Meetinghouse. Please bring an ample dish to share, a serving utensil, and a plate and silverware for yourself. In case of bad weather, call 528-5850 for cancellations and postponements.

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## New Books at the Library

The library adds about 600 new books each year. A good number of these are popular fiction and nonfiction. So, if you're looking for a "best seller" chances are, you'll find it here. If you have suggestions we'd like to consider them. Just bring in author and title! From time to time we'll print a sampling of new titles but we cannot print all so please come in and use your library!

We can also special order specific titles you may want from libraries throughout the country.

A selection of recent acquisitions is listed on page 16.

— Anne Makuc, Library Director

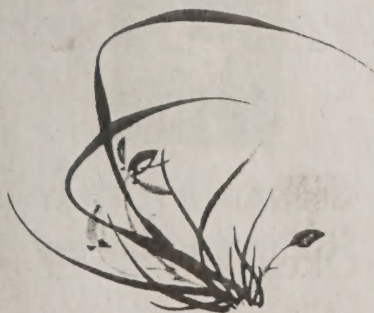
## Public Hearing to Review Development Plan

The Monterey Select Board will conduct a public hearing on Monday, January 12, 2004, at 10 a.m. at the Town Hall for a final review of the current Community Development Plan.

— Monterey Select Board

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## Notice to All Stargazers

The Monterey Cultural Council will be hosting a free evening of astronomy education and stargazing (weather permitting!) at the Monterey Meetinghouse (that's the church) on Friday, January 30, 2004, at 7:30 p.m. The evening winter sky this year presents a parade of planets, so come view and learn about our solar system neighbors as well as deep-sky objects (distant galaxies, star clusters, nebulae).

This program is appropriate for all ages and is open to all interested members of our community. There will be an hour or so of inside presentation in the church social room (the basement), followed by an outdoor session either in Greene Park or down on Barnum Flats, depending on the weather and snow conditions. Our teachers are both experienced astronomy educators: Richard Sanderson, Curator of Physical Science and Planetarium Director at the Springfield Science Museum, and Jack Megas, President of the Springfield Stars Club and expert on the mythology of the night sky. They will come equipped with a slide show, "Dipper Full of Stars," and an array of illustrations, sky charts to hand out, and telescopes for us to use.

Bring warm clothes for the outdoor session, and bring along what you have in

## Cultural Council News

The Monterey Cultural Council is sponsoring two quite different events for your education and enjoyment this winter.

On Friday, January 30 (cloud date February 20), there will be a Community Astronomy program, meeting at the church basement at 7:30 p.m. This program is free and open to all. (See the announcement this page.)

And on Saturday, March 20, there will be a basketmaking workshop in the church basement, taught by Wendy Jensen, well-known Great Barrington basketmaker and teacher. This workshop will have limited enrollment, and there will be a nominal charge for materials; please look for information about the workshop in the February *Monterey News*.

In the annual grant application cycle, which has just been completed, the Cultural Council granted funds to eighteen applicants for the coming year. The above two events are just the beginning!

the way of binoculars and telescopes. Refreshments will be provided by the Cultural Council. Cloud date for this program is Friday, February 20. Please call Joe Baker at 528-9385 for information.



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## Free Environmental Landscaping Workshop for Green Industry

The Center for Ecological Technology (CET) is offering a free workshop to Berkshire area landscapers, facility managers and crews, nursery and retail garden center staff, employees from Department of Public Works, and other professionals who manage lawns and gardens. "Understanding and Practicing Integrated Pest Management (IPM)" will be held on Friday, January 23, 2004, at the Pittsfield Athenaeum, 1 Wendell Avenue, Pittsfield, from 9:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Ron Kujawski, who served as the nursery specialist for University of Massachusetts Extension for twenty-five years, will be the workshop presenter. Pesticide applicators can receive continuing education credits.

The workshop will introduce the basic steps for growing healthy plants, demonstrate alternatives to common pesticides, and show how to establish and maintain lawns and gardens that are less susceptible to drought, weeds, and pests. Participants will learn simple, preventative measures to reduce or eliminate common landscape problems. They will also receive ideas about how to market IPM to their customers and clients.

IPM has other benefits in addition to growing healthy plants. It is a way to meet the growing customer demand for a healthier and environmentally friendly landscape program. A survey of Berkshire residents conducted by CET last year found that 89 percent of those who used landscapers wanted less toxic products used on their lawns and gardens. Using IPM also helps reduce the health and liability risks associated with employee exposure to toxic chemicals.

Ron Kujawski, the workshop presenter, has been instrumental in spreading the word about IPM to the "green industry" across the state; he has also been the garden columnist for the *Berkshire Eagle* for many years. After retiring from U Mass Extension, he is now a consultant to the nursery and landscape industry.

Space is limited. For more information or to preregister, contact Amy Johns at CET at 413-445-4556 or e-mail [amyj@cetonline.org](mailto:amyj@cetonline.org). This program is supported by funds from USDA Rural Utilities Service, the Berkshire Environmental Fund, and the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

— Ruth Dinerman  
Director of Communications, CET



## Green Corner Idle Time

Do you have "idle" time these days? I'm talking about vehicles that are left running at the convenience store, post office, drive-up windows, and during the ever popular morning car warm-up. This habit is guided by misconceptions and is tantamount to throwing money out the tail pipe, not to mention the damage to our health and the environment.

Anyone who needs more motivation then high gas prices to go "idle-free" should check out the "Facts and Myths About Idling" page from Mississauga, Canada ([www.city.mississauga.on.ca/idlefree/facts.htm](http://www.city.mississauga.on.ca/idlefree/facts.htm)). It notes that driving is the best way to warm up your vehicle, much better than idling. Vehicles need no more than 30 seconds to go from ignition to driving, even on the coldest of days. Over ten seconds of idling uses more fuel than restarting the engine. Additionally, frequent restarting has little impact on engine components, while excessive idling can actually cause damage to cylinders, spark plugs, and exhaust systems.

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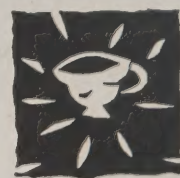
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So how can you decrease unnecessary vehicle idling?

- Reduce "warm-up" idling to 30 seconds.
- Turn your engine off if parked or stopped for more than 10 seconds.
- Avoid using a remote car starter.
- Spread the word to family and friends.

For more information on engine idling, contact Rick Gregg at [RHGregg@aol.com](mailto:RHGregg@aol.com), who has spearheaded the recent endorsement of the Town of Lenox's Idle-Free campaign. CET, a community resource conservation organization serving western Massachusetts can be reached at 413/445-4556 or [www.cetonline.org](http://www.cetonline.org).

— Joy Kirschenbaum, CET



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## Monterey Skating Rink Hours, Winter 2004

The Monterey Park Commission has set the following hours, weather permitting, for the ice skating rink at the Firehouse Pavilion. Skating rink hours are dawn to 9 p.m.

### Monday–Friday

**Dawn till 3:00 p.m.:** Public Skating

**3:00 to 5:00 p.m.:** Kids/Family Hockey Time

**5:00 to 7:00 p.m.:** Public Skating (may be closed for ice-making at this time also; skaters may be asked to leave the ice)

**7:00 p.m. on:** Hockey, except for Public Skating on Wednesdays

### Saturday

**9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.:** Southern Berkshire YMCA Skating Lessons until 2/9/03. Kids/Family Hockey Time (after 2/9/03).

**Noon to 3:00 p.m.:** Public Skating

**3:00 to 5:00 p.m.:** Kids/Family Hockey

**5:00 to 7:00 p.m.:** CLOSED

**7:00 to 9:00 p.m.:** Saturday Night Public Skating Party

### Sunday

**9 a.m. to noon:** Pickup Hockey

**Noon to 3:00 p.m.:** Public Skating

**3:00 to 5:00 p.m.:** Kids/Family Hockey

**After 5 p.m.:** CLOSED for major ice-making to repair from weekend use

## Ice Skating in Monterey!

The Monterey Park Commission is in the process of getting the ice skating rink at the Firehouse Pavilion open in time for skating in January! One warm Saturday morning, between the snow and the rains, Rick Andrus, David Crane, Jim Edelman and Darrell, Matt, Morgan, Cory and Kerry Jassen (a few generations of the Jassen family appeared) prepared the pavilions, which the Park Commission rents from the Fire Department, and transformed it from a pavilion into a closed skating rink. Marta Makuc, Leroy Thorpe,

and Chandler Crawford provided refreshments and encouragement.

Ice is being made daily and the rink will be open depending on how cooperatively cold the weather is this winter. Check at the ice rink and town hall for the schedule. The Park Commission is offering free ice skating lessons for Monterey children, provided through the Southern Berkshire YMCA, and there will also be family hockey, skate swap, recreational skating, and hockey hours. For ice skating questions call David Crane of the Park Commission at 644-9151.

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## From the Meetinghouse . . . Christmas Eve 2003

*If thou wilt foil thy foe with joy  
Then flit not from this heavenly Boy!*  
—Robert Southwell

I always knew I would serve a church whose sanctuary had clear-glass windows. And when I first met with this congregation's search committee, now two and a half years ago, and I first saw this sanctuary after our interview at the Roadside Café, I knew right away that this was the church to which I was called and where I would find a spiritual home. The clear-glass windows were and still are one aspect of my feeling so called.

The church I grew up in had such a sanctuary as this, and I spent every Sunday morning gazing through that clear glass to the trees and the sky and the seagulls flying overhead my hometown, which hugged the Atlantic coast. Sometimes I would listen to the words of the pastor or the music of the choir or the

lessons of the Sunday school—all that was taking place on this side of the windows. Sometimes my mind and meditation would take me somewhere else, on the other side of those panes warped with age. And I liked this sanctuary that was a sanctuary yet not wholly separate from the world as by panes of stained glass. I liked this sanctuary that offered sanctuary yet not escape as behind colorful picture-tellings of stories from scripture. I liked this space that offered instead by the clear windows that were big as walls a reminder for us in worship of the realities of the world, offered indeed insight into the role of the church in the world—which is to be in it though not of it, which is to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with our God, which is indeed to act as the body of Christ for the sake of all that God has made and loves. And I liked the way that on Christmas Eve the windows seemed wonderfully different, made of stained glass after all, yet whose images were not the usual renderings (the baptism of Jesus, the call of the disciples, or Jesus working some wonder or emerging from a now empty tomb) but were us, the congregation, our faces flickering in the candlelight, our mouths open to the silent night, shoulder to shoulder and knee to knee, as many members becoming one body.

So it is for us here now. And we must not make the mistake of thinking that this

is less of an illustration of the gospel than any of the traditional images etched in stained glass. We must not make the mistake of thinking that the age of miracles, if it ever actually was, now has passed, leaving us alone in this mundane world where nothing wondrous ever happens. We must not make the mistake of thinking that walking on water or turning water into wine is what made Jesus the Christ, is the proof that he is what people proclaimed him to be, is the most powerful thing that he ever did. For the good news that is the gospel of Jesus Christ is not merely that a wonder-worker once walked among us but is more essentially that God, who once seemed so distant and so transcendent and so unknown and unknowable, became flesh, became human, born of a woman, and so literally came to matter to us that we might come to matter to one another—that Emmanuel, whose name means "God-with-us," lives and leads us in the Way Eternal; that the kingdom of God is, as it was and as it ever will be, among us here and now, if only we keep our hands and hearts open to it and to one another; and that we who were once no people are now God's people, gathered as a witness to the power of the Holy Spirit and as an illustration of the gospel itself. Indeed, the good news that is revealed in Jesus Christ is that we are all sons and daughters, children of a God

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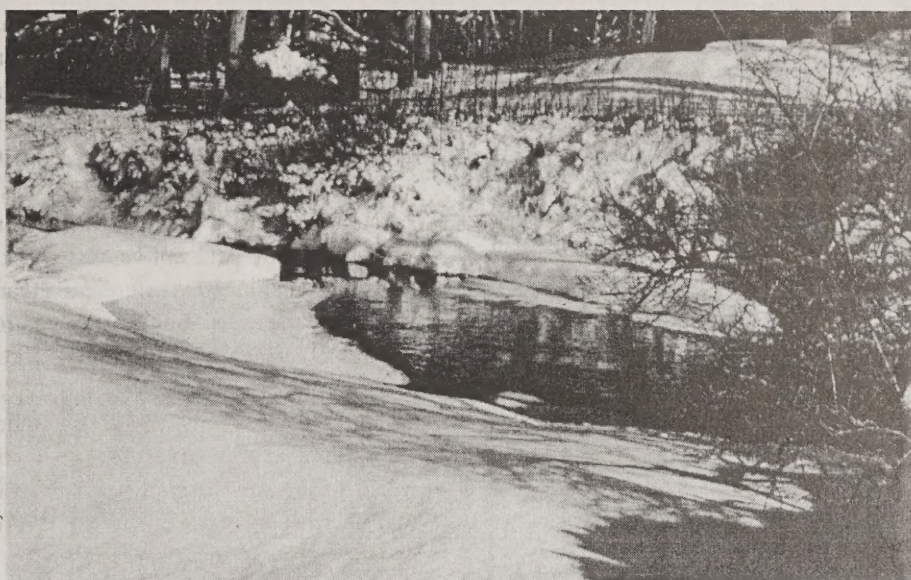
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who labors to bring us forth and who withholds nothing from us.

This truth is somehow more difficult to believe than the lie that we live in a world of want. This truth that God is gracious and ever-giving and that all we must do is open ourselves up to receive is somehow more difficult to live by than the lie that God is withholding something good from us. This, according to the myth of the fall of humanity, is the lie that the crafty serpent, who would come also to be known as the Prince of Lies, told Eve and then Adam—that God forbade them to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil not for their own well-being (a parent watching out for his children) but to preserve the greatness of God alone. And what this myth lacks in historic fact it more than makes up for with honest insight, for the effect of our belief that God is one who withholds from us is played out in history time and again, as we compete nation against nation for God's favor, religion against religion for God's truth, neighbor against neighbor for God's blessings, one against the other for wealth and well-being, for

Glynis Oliver



what we are convinced is in limited supply—love. Yes, the effect of our having been convinced that God is less than gracious with us abounds around us, fills the headlines and makes our hearts heavy as we choose competition over communion, as we choose war and oppression over acts of justice and compassion, as we choose the ways of the world over the Way of Christ who walked in peace and leads all to life.

For some reason, this lie is easier to believe than the truth, as promised Abraham, by whose offspring all nations of the earth are blessed; as prophesied through Isaiah that in the kingdom of God, which is among us, none need hurt or destroy on all God's holy mountain;

and as revealed in Jesus Christ, who is as foretold, a Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace, whose reign shall be forever and ever. He is incarnate here as we await his coming in hope, as we prepare him room in faith, and as we seek once again to live by this truth, born forth in this earthly Christmas night like the dawning of heavenly light from a star whose beams are bright—that God withholds nothing from us and that we might at last sing forth not just our yearning as we have these last four weeks of Advent, "O come, O come Emmanuel," but also our praise that it has come to pass, "Rejoice! Rejoice!"

— Elizabeth Goodman

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## On Beartown Mountain Road: By a Fireside with Tea

"The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction, both are transformed."

— C. G. Jung

*There are such moments,  
floating holy as feathers  
on a pond  
when the sky leaps —*

*In talk of books and God and lanterns,  
a room cannot but hum  
with an amber glow.*

*In the silence  
of a snowy night  
there is room for two more guests  
by the fireside.*

*Invited among us,  
they spread light across the carpet  
and know a World, in  
the warmth of fire,  
the taste of tea.*

— M. Hamilton

## Suicide?

*Because I cannot sleep for the ninth night, he wrote:*

*I drink some wine  
it looks like blood of the earth  
not of the spirit —  
have I crossed over to a dark eucharist?*

*O Lord, believe me  
I seek the terrible meaning  
so long, so long imprisoned here!*

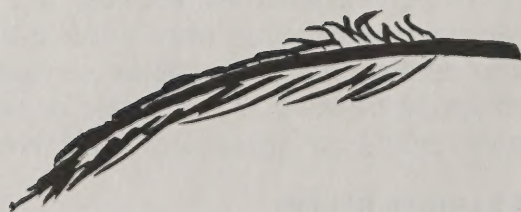
*have we been transfixed staring  
in the wrong direction  
above, beyond  
at a painted paradise of angels with the faces  
of disappointed men?*

*let me hold this wine, drink slowly  
measuring the ages, treasuring the sun  
imprisoned in these grapes of now!  
look below, within —*

*I love the earth so much  
I'd willingly lie down therein  
and cover myself, certain as a seed  
I'll flower in another element  
without fear, find light in darkness  
because it may be here*

*You hide your face  
waiting for us desperate enough  
to seek Your love in death  
or hardest of all  
in life, in life, in life!*

— A. O. Howell





## The Hill Across The Way

*In summertime we cannot see  
the hill across the way  
as trees between, so thickly green,  
align in bright array.*

*But later, when the leaves are down,  
the autumn viewer sees  
a presence stark and dominant  
past silhouetted trees.*

*With snow, much softer shapes appear,  
all white against the sky.  
The trees, the hill, and houses too,  
a dazzle for the eye.*

*Ensconced across the way, we greet  
the bounty of each season's treat.*

— Edwin Schur

## A Berkshire Winter

*The naked trees like skeletons now stand,  
Staunch silhouettes against a sunset sky;  
Their ice-clad branches creaking in the wind  
While from chimneys plumes of smoke are rising high.  
Old Boreas his organ music plays  
And often howls and whistles through the night,  
Dipping and whirling in frolicsome ways  
Piling the snow into mountains of white.*

*Then there are days in winter when the sun  
Spreads scores of diamonds on the crusted snow,  
Though conifers are bending to the ground,  
The howling, boisterous winds have ceased to blow.  
So peaceful is the stillness when the wind  
Seems lost to oblivion once more  
And flocks of birds, to feed, come sailing in  
Casting fleet shadows on my kitchen floor.*

— Eleanor Kimberley

## Searching for another meal

*Bro Nello and Baby Rolo  
searching for yet another meal  
at the edge of the old city,  
(cold, damp air of pre-all-hallows)  
came upon elder Rugiero  
with a fresh catch on the corner  
where they bought one shining tuna  
at once he removed his mask  
and appeared as Pulcinella  
they followed him over the bridge  
first one way, then the other,  
as is so with Pulcinella  
they drank from the same dark bottle  
that seemed to never get empty  
discussing renaissance door knobs  
opening on gothic gardens  
he brought them to the walnut tree  
that turned itself into a bowl  
that filled itself with zinnias  
they ate with unabashed gusto  
for the zinnias were cut thin  
with oil of apple and moon mint  
when they had eaten all their soup  
they jumped out the only window  
Pulcinella grabbed three brushes  
and they all began painting wide  
colorfilled strokes on the black ground  
of the ego-ridden playground*

— R. Zukowski



## Highlands Communities Initiative Schedule

### Managing Land For Wildlife Habitat Jan. 21, Charlemont Academy, 7 p.m.

This workshop is perfect for conservation commissions, land trust board members, land managers, or any landowners who would like to make their land more wildlife-friendly. Anne Marie Kittredge, a wildlife forester with Mass Wildlife, will discuss steps that encourage biodiversity on forested land, meadows, and agricultural fields, as well as general practices that owners of smaller pieces of land can undertake. Free and open to all.

### Tracking Winter Wildlife

Jan. 24, Chesterfield, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

John Foster of the New England Naturalist Center will be leading this outdoor workshop on tracking winter wildlife. Deep snow will require snowshoes. \$25, registration required.

### Planning Vibrant Villages

Jan. 27, Chester Village Gallery, 7 p.m.

This workshop with Denis Superczynski of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission will present steps for identifying and establishing a village center district, and discuss strategies for enhancing existing villages. Free, open to all.

For more information or to register for any of these events, contact Wendy Sweetser at 413-587-0716 x14 or [wsweetser@ttor.org](mailto:wsweetser@ttor.org).

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## Wildness and Indoor Cats

We have always had cats; in fact I used to say I was raised by my cat grandma, Patsy. Patsy was a gray-striped tiger cat that lived a long time. We had a cat door and she could go in and out—when she was out she often found “romance” so there were kittens in the closet on a regular basis. This was the ideal family home I visited any time I was the least bit mad at my human family. I could bury my head in the cat and kitten family and soak up Patsy’s purring. Her nipples were too teeny for me, but how I envied her nursing kittens.

We read Kipling on cats and were loyal subscribers to the idea that there was a wildness in cats, a mystique that changed them at night into creatures of the underworld. They went out that cat door and who knows what they did? But by breakfast time they were transformed to our biddable house pets, winding about our legs mewing for milk and Friskies. We exploited them, for the thrill of their nighttime wildness, and

they connected us to a life we didn’t really want firsthand.

There were of course indoor cats. We heard about them and pitied them in their Manhattan apartments: no night life, no wild. None of that life we didn’t really want ourselves but were happy to absorb through Patsy’s return in the mornings. Sometimes she would be a little beat up, often pregnant. We took her to the vet, shoved the antibiotics down her throat, and found homes for all the kittens. It was the ’50s, the good old, bad old days when nuclear power was cheap and clean, parents protected their kids from adult burdens, and it was okay to have a cat that had a hundred kittens.

We have come a long and painful way since then, but ain’t it grand to have the truth? Nuclear power is dangerous and expensive, there are no grown-ups after all (we know because we are supposed to be them, now), and cats should be kept indoors.

There was a recent time when I would not have believed I’d live out in the woods, far from traffic, and keep my cats

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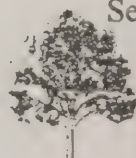
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in. My city brother has cats kept in, but this is the nature of city life: you have to be scared and you have to hunker down. Out here in the country life is good and free, no locks on the doors, no fears for the cats.

As it turns out, country life is just as fraught as any other and we learned this two summers ago when our two cats went into the ether, within one week. All we found was a clump of fur, with a little hide, a few hundred feet through the woods from here. It was pure white fur, so obviously it was our missing white guy, Angel. We never found any trace of Bubo, the owl-like tiger that reminded me so of the Patsy of my childhood.

We started over with some little rescued kittens from a feral cat program. There was paperwork and it was called "adoption." We were strongly urged to keep our new kitties indoors, even though they had certainly come from outdoors. Why? So they would live longer, stay healthier.

We said we'd try it, and after a year of life with the young hooligans indoors, we have come a long, long way from our earlier ideas of what is the best life for a cat.

The first observation to report is that there is plenty of room for Total Wild

right here in the house. The wild is in the cat, not in the woods. Our three are less domesticated than Patsy ever was and if there is a "cat that walks by himself" (Kipling's cat), it is our Milagro when visitors come. He simply vanishes, in a house we built ourselves log by log so



that we know every possible corner. Sometimes Milagro is gone from the world of people.

Then there is Heidi, the tricolor female. She is the hunter, though she has never been, since we got her, any more outdoors than on our fenced deck. When the dog comes in from outside, Heidi is on her in a flash, drinking in the molecules of "out there." Ruby the dog brings with her the tales of the world beyond the house, and for Heidi the wild cat, this is the total definition. We can only guess at the life she leads as she scours the dog for

information, the virtual wild. It does not lead Heidi to duck out the door herself; the olfactory experience is complete for her. The actual hunting she does, on the deck, has brought in several large insects and one flying squirrel. When she comes in with this prey we are looking at the feral cat, defined.

It might be tempting to make a leap here, to draw conclusions about human constrictions and virtual freedoms. I feel cautioned about any such leap. The dog goes out, she comes back in one piece. The cats run around our house at night like it was a drag strip and in the morning we go downstairs and pick up the pieces, with no small thrill at the disregard they

have for our ordered lives. Some people live in a house and never go out, yet their very lack of travel enables them to experience what some of us can only dream of facing. Emily Dickinson was more Kipling's cat than I would ever dare to be, but I have slept outdoors in grizzly country, been up in an airplane, and lived in a nuclear age. It does not take wilderness to be wild: the receptors are all. Do you want to keep them tuned up? Pay attention to your cat, your dog, your goldfish— even yourself.

— Bonner J. McAllester

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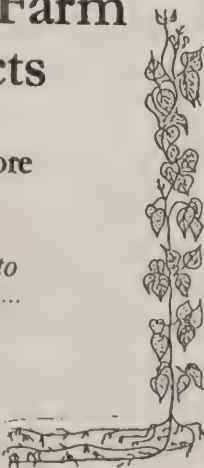


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## Meteorology of a Snowy Owl

The fleeting television satellite images showed the impending weather pattern already passing over the southwest corner of Massachusetts, where lies our sleepy little town of Monterey. As darkness fell, the first blizzard of the snow season was already, like a wolf, at our doors. We sat at the kitchen table looking out the window at the deluge of tiny ice crystals illuminated by the porch floodlights. They blew in every direction but accumulated in the lower leeward corner of each pane, where they froze into kaleidoscopes, no two of whose designs were exactly alike.

We were grateful that the last leftovers of Thanksgiving were still in the refrigerator, and while we complacently accepted what was to curtail our coming and going the next day, we felt smugly well fed, warm, and content to sit down to one final dinner of turkey sandwiches with hot gravy, warmed up butternut squash and creamy mashed potatoes, and for desert the last two fermented pieces of minced pie. Before going to bed, I knew the morning light would bring a glinting gauntlet of plowing and clearing of paths, as had happened last year when back-to-back storms kept town highway plows rumbling past for days and eventually brought on high heating-oil bills.

Meteorology, according to the *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, published in Springfield, is a science that deals with the atmosphere and its various phenomena and especially weather forecasting. But while forecasts made far enough in advance to provide a warning to mortals

on Earth often seem no better than those written in the stars, natural observations of wildlife and their physical preparation for the severity of conditions that are still over the horizon are also predictable components of the crystal ball. For instance, The University of North Carolina's center for providing predictions of required energy inventory levels for fuel companies in regions of the eastern seaboard, programs into its computers the thickness of animal skins and fur, along with a number of other factors.

It is a tradition in our pre-Thanksgiving dinner ritual to take a walk around the eastern end of Lake Garfield, and my grandsons noticed a long-legged shore bird with an extended bill racing along the icy edge of the water, which with the drawdown reminded me of low tide in a coastal estuary. About fifteen inches high, this sandpiper-type bird periodically stopped moving like a roadrunner to pause and pick out of the sand and mud a morsel of mussel. The oldest boy thought it was a yellowlegs, but in later checking *The National Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds*, we decided it was a willet, somewhat similar and already transformed from a tawny summer color phase to its camouflage gray winter plumage.

One reliable guideline in forecasting future accumulations can be an accurate record of past history, projecting averages into the future. The Highway Department and Maynard Forbes probably have more statistics and are more tuned into this frequency than anyone else, even though it is hard to bet on a meteorological roll of the dice. The coffee club in the

church basement offers much more diversified opinions. Many of the members were or are now those whose livelihood is tied to the land, such as farmers, foresters, hunters, and trappers, as well as recreational outdoorsmen. As of this writing, just at the winter solstice when the sun is farthest south of the equator, there is at least one report of the arrival of a snowy owl. Could this be an omen?

Our winter woods also have mammals such as the blacktail weasel, that are warm-blooded vertebrates, unlike chameleons, but are similarly able to change the color of their fur from brown, progressing to patches of brown and white, and eventually to all white, if that is what is called for to diminish their visibility to predators. Little wonder that Native Americans here called the lunar gauntlet ahead the "Hunger Moon." It will be full on January 7.

On January 21, the Hunger Moon will have waned until it is just a sliver among other winter constellations, including Orion, The Hunter. Then on February 2, Groundhog Day, the great horned owls will already be nesting, and the season that brings the presence of snowy owls will be at a halfway point, so their days here will hopefully be numbered.

— George Emmons

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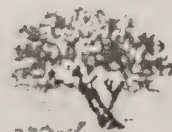
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## Selection of Recent Arrivals at Monterey Library

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P. D. James, *The Murder Room*  
Ursula Hegi, *Sacred Time*  
Aharon Magged, *Foiglmán*  
Ed McBain, *The Frumious Bandersnatch*

### Adult Nonfiction

Madeleine Albright, *Madam Secretary: A Memoir*  
Elizabeth Cohen, *The House on Beartown Road: A Memoir of Learning and Forgetting*  
Thomas A. Desjardin, *The Honored Dead: How the Story of Gettysburg Shaped American Memory*  
Ann Garrels, *Naked in Baghdad, The Iraq War as Seen by NPR's Correspondent*  
Alan Lightman, *Living with the Genie: Essays on Technology and the Quest for Human Mastery*  
Jessica Lynch, *I Am a Soldier Too*  
Bill O'Reilly, *Who's Looking Out For You?*

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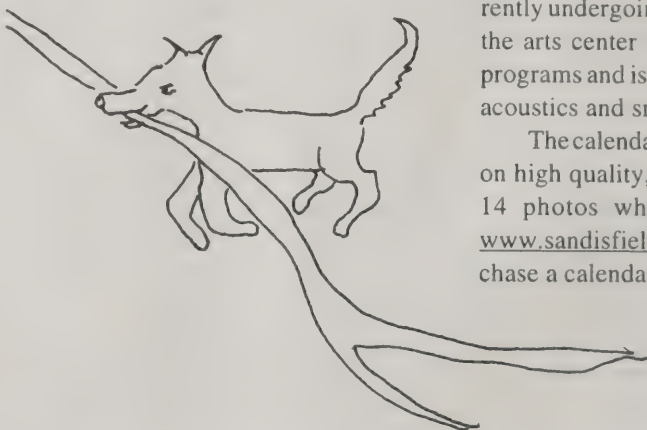
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Nathaniel Philbrick, *Sea of Glory: America's Voyage of Discovery—The U.S. Exploring Expeditions, 1838–1842*

David Halberstam, editor, *Defining a Nation: Our America and the Sources of its Strength*

### Children/Young Adults

Eric Carle and Kazuo Iwamura, *Where Are You Going? To See My Friend*  
Mary Collins, *Airborne, A Photobiograph of Wilbur & Orville Wright*,  
Laurie Lindop, *Probing Volcanoes*  
Laurie Lindop, *Chasing Tornadoes*  
David McPhail, *Henry Bear's Christmas*  
Sally Ride and Tam O'Shaughnessy, *Exploring Our Solar System*  
Mark Todd, *Monster Trucks*  
Stephen M. Tomecek, *What a Great Idea: Inventions That Changed the World*

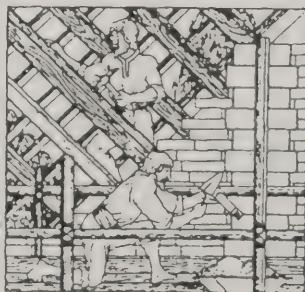


## Scenes of Sandisfield Calendar Available

The 2004 Scenes of Sandisfield Calendar is currently being sold for \$14 (includes shipping), with all proceeds going to the Sandisfield Arts Center. Sandisfield resident, Richard Migot, photographed such landmarks as the New Boston Church, the Silver Brook Café, and Snow Farm. Also featured are scenic landscapes including an old cemetery filled with purple creeping phlox, trees glazed with ice, a local apple orchard and horse stable.

Sandisfield is located about 25 minutes east of Great Barrington and is known for its scenic beauty. The Sandisfield Arts Center is housed in a historic 1839 building which was once a Baptist Church and then an orthodox synagogue. Currently undergoing extensive renovations, the arts center is now used for cultural programs and is recognized for its superb acoustics and small-town charm.

The calendars are printed in full color on high quality, glossy paper. There are 14 photos which can be viewed at [www.sandisfieldartscenter.org](http://www.sandisfieldartscenter.org). To purchase a calendar, call 413-258-4904.



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## A Passing

For a number of years, I have been smitten with the beauty of a scene on Tyringham Road. The beaver pond, on the left just past Art School Road, itself breathtakingly beautiful, has been a backdrop for some perfectly placed dead trees. One of these trees, with a few big, old branches still intact, has provided a nesting place for many a heron and been a constant source of beauty and inspiration for me.

When my daughter Tarsi began going to school in Lenox and I was coming to terms with 72 miles of driving each day, the opportunity to pass by this spot twice each day was high on my list of "pros." For most of the year, there are no herons in the scene; the tree itself, with its jutting branches holding whatever remnants of heron nest remain, has been the focus of this picture for me. It, and its setting, takes my breath away. In the spring, when the herons are present, it is an over-the-edge thrill. You see the nest coming back into good repair and a heron sitting proudly on her nest atop the tree. Sometimes a heron is standing on one of the branches and another is on the nest!

Years back, Lindsey and Sandy lived in the farmette bordering this swamp. When they got married, I fancied making a painting of this scene to give them for a wedding present. (As I get older, I find that it's perfectly okay to just fancy things



Glynis Oliver

and not have to do them!). But things pass. Sandy passed. Late this fall, in one of those huge wind events we had, this tree passed. I glanced over one morning to take my morning dose of delight and it was gone!

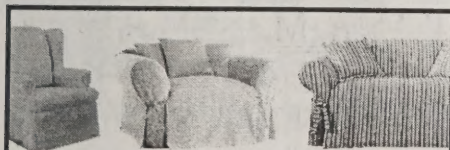
My reaction to this has been one of predictable stages of grief. I was heartbroken. I was angry at the wind. Some days I won't look because I don't want to see it missing. Other days I look and try to recreate the feeling of just how its beauty always touched me. I wonder if I will ever paint it . . . from memory.

Most recently, I have come to fondly miss it. I miss it the way I miss seeing Milly sweeping up in front of Walsh's. I

miss it the way I miss nodding to Wallace sitting on the porch across from the post office. I miss it the way I miss hearing Bob T. bellowing inside the Roadside. It was something lovely that I was privileged to have experienced.

We usually have a word of the week posted on the board at Rawson Brook Farm. This holiday season, it has been "trim," a nice multi-use word reminding one about needs of the tree, the waistline, and the goats' feet. But the word that most often reappears on the board is one that I need to return to continually: "flow." A passing is an integral part of the flow. May the new year flow in.

— Susan Sellow



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## Remembering Paul H. Bynack

Paul H. Bynack, 69, of Main Road in Monterey died November 28 at home. Born in Monterey on January 24, 1934, son of George and Adeline Hart Bynack, he attended local schools and graduated from the former Searles High School in 1951.

Mr. Bynack worked as a truck driver in construction until 1965, when he started long-haul trucking on the East Coast. Following a back injury, he drove for Ormsbee School Bus Co. in New Marlborough for a few years before returning to long-haul trucking. He retired in 1997 because of ill health.

He was a fan of auto racing and loved to travel. He had visited more than two-thirds of the United States and had traveled to Germany and Austria.

He and his wife, the former Vivian Reed, were married July 10, 1954, in Hillsdale, N.Y.

Besides his wife, he leaves four sons, Michael Bynack of Milton, Fla., William Bynack of West Stockbridge, James Bynack and Paul Bynack Jr., both of Monterey; three daughters, Susan Bolduc and Wendy Strickland, both of Otis, and Nancy Bynack of Monterey; nine grandchildren and a great-grandson.

A graveside service was conducted December 8 in Corashire Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to

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## Heroin Problem in South Co.

To the Editor

I was concerned to read in the December issue that heroin addiction is an increasing problem in South County. The most effective treatment for this disease, methadone maintenance treatment, is not available in Berkshire County. Some Berkshire residents travel to Albany, New York City, or Northampton to access this treatment.

This is an issue for the county to consider now, lest the harm (HIV, overdose, crime, and death) becomes unmanageable.

— Edwin A. Salsitz, M.D., Monterey



HospiceCare in the Berkshires, St. Jude's Children's Hospital, or the Minnie Pearl Cancer Foundation through Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home. Memories and reflections may be sent to the family through [www.finnertyandstevens.com](http://www.finnertyandstevens.com).

## Pedestrians in Winter

To the Editor:

On Dec. 8, at two past the noon hour, a handsome upstanding young man (whom I will tactfully not identify) came hurtling down Beartown Mt. Road in a red truck with a yellow snowplow attached. He never even applied his brakes. So great was his speed (a fire?) that he splattered this handicapped octogenarian from head to foot with a great smack of slush! She was struggling to walk in uncertain terrain with two sticks. This was a double insult for the victim as it now meant electing whether to undress and dress again, a lengthy and painful procedure, or sit in wet clothes and wait to dry out.

She was astonished when another neighbor identified him. But as it is the yuletide, she has decided to wish him the blessing of reaching a healthier old age than hers and to use this occasion as a cautionary tale to all heedless drivers: *slow down!!* There are many other valiant pedestrians, old and young, yet to hike up and down our lovely wintry roads in Monterey.

— Alice O. Howell, Monterey

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*Carolers (l. to r.) Tina Schenk, Susan Sellew, Cora Baker, and Tarsi Dunlop singing at Gould Farm gathering before Christmas*

Glynis Oliver

## The Observer

### November 26–December 25

High temp. (11/29) .....	60°
Low temp. (12/9) .....	6°
Avg. high temp. ....	35.1°
Avg. low temp. ....	19.3°
Avg. temp. ....	27.2°
Total precipitation (rain and melted snow) .....	7.24"
Snowfall .....	30.3"
Season total snowfall .....	33.3"
(Past season total to date .....	35.5")
Precipitation occurred on 19 days.	

## Contributors

We are grateful to the following for recent contributions to the *Monterey News*. Readers like you make it possible for us to continue publishing our community newspaper.

Ruth Rosenblatt  
Anna Cohen  
Kenneth Kahn  
Sharon Wiles  
Walter & Marjorie Miner

## Calendar

**Every Monday (exc. holidays):** Select Board meeting, 8:30 a.m.–noon. Town Offices.

**Thursday, January 8:** Free blood pressure clinic, 2:30–3:30 p.m., Town Offices, by Visiting Nurses Assoc.

**Monday, January 12:** Public hearing for final review of Community Development Plan, 10 a.m., Town Offices.

**Wednesday, January 14:** Community Dinner, 6 p.m., Monterey Meetinghouse. MaryKate Jordan will speak on Edith Wharton. See p. 4 for details.

**Monday, January 19:** Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday observed. Town Offices closed.

**Saturday, January 24:** Square and contra dancing, 8:30–11:30 p.m., Sheffield Grange, Rt. 7, Sheffield. Music by Mountain Laurel, calling by Steve Howland. Adults \$6, children \$3. Information 528-9385.

**Friday, January 30:** Evening of astronomy: talk followed by observation of the heavens, beginning at 7:30 p.m. at Monterey Meetinghouse. Sponsored by Monterey Cultural Council. See p. 5.

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Contributions from local artists this month:

Pat Arnow, pp. 7, 10, 16, 18; George Emmons, p. 14;

Bonner McAllester, p. 13.

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